

Appln. No.: 10/809,210
Amendment Dated February 28, 2006
Reply to Office Action of November 30, 2005

ITFT-PEV104US

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached sheets of drawings are identical to those filed on April 26, 2004, except that sheets 1 - 5 now reflect that they are "Replacement Sheets" and Fig. 2 has been updated consistent with amendments to the specification to change element label "40" to read "46." These sheets replace the sheets filed April 26, 2004.

Attachment

Remarks/Arguments:

Preliminary Matters

Claims 1 - 49 are pending. Applicants note with appreciation the indication that claim 49 is allowed. Applicants further note with appreciation the indication that claims 5 - 8, 11 - 14, 16 - 18, 22 - 25, 30 - 35, 37, 39, and 42 - 48 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicants respectfully submit, however, that in view of the instant amendments to independent claims 1, 20, 28, 36, and 40, claims 5 - 8, 11 - 14, 16 - 18, 22 - 25, 30 - 35, 37, 39, and 42 - 48 are currently in condition for allowance.

The drawings have been amended to indicate identifying information, including "Replacement Sheet," on the front of each sheet. Furthermore, Fig. 2 has been amended to properly denote the rear bracket with reference numeral 46. The applicant does not have any explanation for the "extraneous photocopying marks" referenced in the Office Action. Applicant's copy of the drawings filed April 26, 2005 do not have any such marks. The applicant respectfully notes that the markings on the upper right hand corner and lower left hand corner are not extraneous marks, but rather the scan target points suggested by 37 CFR 1.84(g). Figs. 1A, 6A, and 6B also include brackets to denote that multiple unconnected elements are intended to be viewed together as a single drawing.

The specification has been amended to correct a minor clerical error and to capitalize the registered trademark LIGHTNIN® where used as a trademark. Use of the term in the context of "made by Lightnin" is proper trade name use, not trademark use, so the applicant respectfully submits that additional amendments are not required.

35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1 - 4, 9, 10, 15, 19 - 21, 26 - 29, 36, 38, 40, and 41 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,378,062 to Rains. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of these claims and respectfully submit that these claims are patentable over Rains for at least the reasons set forth below.

Independent claim 1, as amended, recites features that are neither disclosed nor suggested by Rains, namely:

. . . a *fixed* docking station adapted to receive the portable tank in an engaged configuration. . . .

As illustrated in the exemplary embodiment shown in Figs. 1A, 1B, 5, 6A, and 6B, and for illustrative purposes only, mounting plate 82 of docking station 16 is *affixed* to a freestanding floor-mounted or wall-mounted structure (not shown for clearer visibility of the

functional elements). Page 5, lines 25 - 26. Such affixation is represented most clearly in Figs. 6A and 6B which illustrate that docking station 16 is suspended above floor 80. Page 5, lines 24 - 25. A user moves portable tank 14 to fixed docking station 16 and pushes portable tank 14 against fixed docking station 16 to an engaged configuration. Page 4, lines 15 - 19.

In contrast, Rains neither discloses nor suggests a *fixed* docking station. More specifically, with reference to Figs. 1 and 2, transporter 12 is portable so that it can be moved adjacent to an agitator tank 34 for engagement. Column 1, lines 50 - 53. As illustrated in Fig. 1, transporter 10 includes a baseplate 54 including a plurality of wheels 56. Column 2, lines 44 - 45. Handle 58 allows an operator to move transporter 12 from one location to another location. Column 2, lines 45 - 47. Thus, Rains neither discloses nor suggests a *fixed* docking station, and therefore fails to disclose or suggest each and every element of Applicants' claimed invention.

Accordingly, for at least the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that independent claim 1, as amended, is patentable over Rains and should be allowed. Claims 2 - 4, 9, 10, 15, and 19 are dependent upon claim 1. Therefore, claims 2 - 4, 9, 10, 15, and 19 should also be allowed at least as dependent upon an allowable base claim. Reconsideration of these claims is respectfully requested.

Independent claims 20, 28, 36, and 40 (as amended), while not identical to claim 1, include similar features, namely a *fixed* docking station. Accordingly, independent claims 20, 28, 36, and 40, as amended, are also patentable over the cited reference for at least the reasons set forth above. Claims 21, 26, and 27 are dependent upon claim 20, claim 29 is dependent upon claim 28, claim 38 is dependent upon claim 36, and claim 41 is dependent upon claim 40. Therefore, claims 21, 26, 27, 29, 38, and 41 should also be allowed at least as dependent upon their respective allowable base claims. Reconsideration of these claims is respectfully requested.

Applicants further traverse the rejection of claim 4, and respectfully submit that this claim is patentable over Rains for at least the additional reasons set forth below.

Claim 4 recites features that are neither disclosed nor suggested by Rains, namely:

. . . a linkage for converting engagement motion transmitted by the tank in a first direction into engagement motion of the coupling second portion in a second direction.

As illustrated in the exemplary embodiment shown in Figs. 6A and 6B, and for illustrative purposes only, linkage 34 translates the lateral motion (i.e., motion in the first direction) of tank 14 toward docking station 16 into upward motion (i.e., motion in the second

direction) of drive magnet 22 into drive magnet receiving hub 24 on tank 14. Page 7, lines 10 - 12. As explained above, a user moves portable tank 14 to fixed docking station 16 and pushes portable tank 14 against fixed docking station 16 to an engaged configuration. Page 4, lines 15 - 19. The conversion by linkage 34 of the lateral motion of tank 14 into upward motion of drive magnet 22 results in an automatic or snap-fit kind of engagement. In other words, linkage 34 enables the user to simply push portable tank 14 laterally against fixed docking station 16 to effect engagement. The required translation of motions (lateral to upward) is achieved by linkage 34. Consequently, there is no extra manipulation required by the user.

In contrast, Rains neither discloses nor suggests a linkage for converting engagement motion transmitted by a tank in a first direction into engagement motion of a coupling second portion in a second direction. Firstly, as explained above, *transporter 12* is moved adjacent to an agitator tank 34 to an engaged configuration. Column 1, lines 50 - 53. Thus, engagement motion is not even transmitted by tank 34 in a first direction. Secondly, with reference to Figs. 1 and 2, to effect engagement the operator must rotate wheel 66. Column 3, lines 3 - 4. Wheel shaft 68 is coupled to linkage mechanism 74 which includes push rod 76 pivotally connected to shaft 68, arm 48, and a pair of secondary rods 78 and 80. Column 3, lines 4 - 8. Rotation of wheel 66 moves push rod 76 which, through pivotal movement of the various components of linkage mechanism 74, rotates arm 48 and mixer assembly 14 as illustrated in Fig. 2. Column 3, lines 11 - 13. Linkage mechanism 74 does not allow for an automatic or snap-fit kind of engagement. The operator must move transporter 12 in the first position shown in Fig. 1, and then rotate wheel 66 to effect engagement as shown in Fig. 2. Column 3, lines 20 - 24. The required translation of motions is not achieved solely by linkage mechanism 74. Thus, Rains neither discloses nor suggests a linkage for converting engagement motion transmitted by a tank in a first direction into engagement motion of a coupling second portion in a second direction, and therefore fails to disclose or suggest each and every element of Applicants' claimed invention.

Thus, Applicants invention, as recited in claim 4, takes advantage of the momentum of moving a relatively heavy tank into the fixed docking station to provide a motive force for engagement of the mixer. This is an advantage over Rains, which requires users to move the transporter, align it manually, and then manually crank the linkage to engage the coupling.

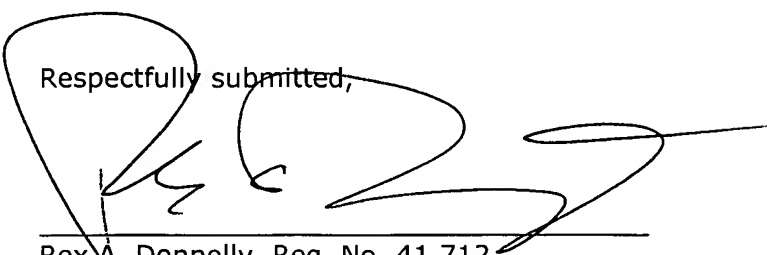
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Conclusion

In view of the amendments and points of distinction set forth above, Applicants contend that the above-identified application is in condition for allowance, which action is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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Attachments: Figures 1A - 6B (5 sheets)

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